

DATELINE: NO. 101 WASHINGTON, D.C.
ALINA ZERANSKI

JULY 28, 1976

PHYSICIANS RADIO NETWORK
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES, AND EVENTS HERE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES -- BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK (AT THIS TIME). TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI ON A VISIT TO THE WASHINGTON OFFICE OF A NATIONAL RADIO SERVICE BEAMING JUST TO A SPECIFIC, SELECT SEGMENT OF THE AUDIENCE.

NARR: THE LAST PATIENT IS GONE. HIS TIRED DOCTOR WANTS TO RELAX A BIT BEFORE FACING THE RUSH-HOUR TRAFFIC. HE TURNS ON A SMALL RADIO RECEIVER, CLOSES HIS EYES AND FOR A FEW MINUTES LISTENS TO A REPORT FROM A MEDICAL CONFERENCE HE WAS NOT ABLE TO ATTEND.

AN INFORMATION EXPLOSION HAS FLOODED BUSY PHYSICIANS WITH A MASS OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS, NEWSLETTERS AND PRODUCT CIRCULARS. EVEN THE MOST CONSCIENTIOUS PRACTITIONER MUST DESPAIR OF TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH THE READING MATERIAL NECESSARY TO STAY IN CONTACT WITH THE NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS IN HIS FIELD. BUT SOME HELP COMES THROUGH THE AIR IN THE FORM OF A SPECIAL PHYSICIANS RADIO NETWORK.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- SAUNDERS

"IT IS BASICALLY TO GET UP-TO-DATE NEWS INFORMATION AND MORE GENERAL INFORMATION TO DOCTORS AROUND THE COUNTRY. IT ALSO HAS AN EDUCATIONAL ASPECT. THERE IS A LOT OF MEDICAL RESEARCH GOING ON ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY OBVIOUSLY, AND A LOT OF IT IS LOCATED IN THIS AREA. THERE ARE MANY NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS CONNECTED WITH THE HEALTH FIELD. DOCTORS, VIA THIS RADIO SERVICE, CAN HEAR ABOUT THESE KINDS OF DEVELOPMENTS THE DAY THEY HAPPEN."

NARR: THIS WAS ROBERT SAUNDERS, MANAGER OF THE WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE OF THE PHYSICIANS RADIO NETWORK. THIS SERVICE WAS STARTED TWO YEARS AGO IN JUST TWO CITIES BY THE VISUAL INFORMATION SYSTEM COMPANY, SUPPLYING MEDICAL VIDEO PROGRAMS TO TEACHING INSTITUTIONS AND HOSPITALS. THE DOCTORS' RADIO PROGRAM IS NEW EVERY DAY AND REPEATED 24 TIMES. PHYSICIANS CAN LISTEN TO ANY PART OF IT AT ANY PARTICULAR MOMENT, THEN DO SOMETHING ELSE, AND THEN CATCH UP WITH THE REST OF THE STORY. AS AN ADDED CONVENIENCE, THE PROGRAM IS BROKEN DOWN INTO TWO THIRTY MINUTE SEGMENTS, EACH FEATURING SPOTS ON SPECIFIC MEDICAL SPECIALTIES. A RECENT SURVEY SHOWS THAT, WHILE DOCTORS TUNE IN AT RANDOM, HALF OF THEM SPEND ABOUT 25 MINUTES LISTENING EACH TIME THEY TURN ON THE RADIO. TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY SEGMENT, THEY MAY CONTACT THE NETWORK REFERENCE SERVICE. IN THE NEAR FUTURE THE NEWS WILL BE UPDATED TWICE A DAY, AND SPECIAL SERIES OF 15-MINUTE CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS WILL BE ADDED.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- SAUNDERS

"THE PROGRAM IS A ONE HOUR SHOW. IT IS A VERY FAST PACED SORT OF ARRANGEMENT. USUALLY IT IS NEWS SUMMARIES EVERY QUARTER OF AN HOUR AND THEN SLIGHTLY LONGER STORIES, MAYBE ONE OR TWO MINUTES, MAYBE EVEN THREE MINUTES, VERY FAST MOVING. IT IS AIMED TO GET TO THE BUSY DOCTOR. HE CAN SWITCH ON HIS RADIO, AND HE CAN GET A LARGE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION WHICH IS INTERESTING TO HIM IN A SHORT TIME. IT TENDS TO BE A LITTLE SUPERFICIAL, BUT WE HOPE NOT TOO MUCH. THE PROGRAM IS COMPILED IN NEW YORK. THERE ARE SOMETHING LIKE A HUNDRED FREE-LANCERS, REPORTERS WHO FEED STORIES TO THE NEW YORK OFFICE EVERY DAY."

NARR: THE NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS EMPLOYS TWENTY FOUR PERSONS, ADMINISTRATORS, TECHNICAL OPERATORS AND JOURNALISTS

NARR: FROM MEDICAL FIELDS. THEY KEEP TRACK OF ALL MEDICAL
(CONT'D) DEVELOPMENTS AND CHECK THE REPORTS COMING FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY BY TELEPHONE, TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY ARE UP-TO-DATE AND FACTUALLY CORRECT. AT MIDNIGHT, THE NEW PROGRAM GOES ON THE AIR. THE RECENTLY OPENED WASHINGTON OFFICE PREPARES MANY INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS ON RESEARCH IN PROGRESS AND NEWS FROM THE LEGISLATIVE FIELD AFFECTING DOCTORS' PRACTICE.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- SAUNDERS

"THE PROGRAM THAT ORIGINATES IN NEW YORK... IS FED BY TELEPHONE LINES TO 24 CITIES AT THIS MOMENT. AND THERE, IT IS BROADCAST BY LOCAL STATIONS, FM STATIONS. IT DOESN'T GO OUT ON A NORMAL FREQUENCY FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE TO LISTEN TO, ONLY ON PRIVATE FREQUENCY, A SIDE BAND. AND TO RECEIVE IT, A DOCTOR OR WHOEVER WOULD LIKE TO LISTEN TO THIS PROGRAM IS GIVEN A SPECIAL RECEIVING SET TO DECODE THE SIGNAL... WE KNOW THAT 21,000 DOCTORS HAVE THESE RECEIVING SETS... AT THE END OF THIS YEAR, WE ARE HOPING THAT IT WILL GO TO FIFTY STATIONS AND WILL REACH SOMETHING LIKE 75,000 DOCTORS."

NARR: THE AIM IS TO REACH AT LEAST HALF THE PRACTICING DOCTORS IN THE COUNTRY.

IT WAS NOT FEASIBLE TO ASK THEM TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE RADIO SERVICE BEFORE IT WAS STARTED, SO COMMERCIAL FUNDING WAS NEEDED. IN EVERY HOUR OF BROADCAST, THERE ARE EIGHT ONE-MINUTE COMMERCIALS PROVIDED BY FIVE MAJOR PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES. AND STILL, THE NETWORK IS OPERATING AT A LOSS. BUT DOCTOR REACTION IS SO FAVORABLE THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ASK THEM FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS AND GAIN MORE INDEPENDENCE FROM COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- SAUNDERS

"A FEW WEEKS AGO, ONE OF THE SENATE'S COMMITTEES WAS WORRIED ABOUT THESE ASPECTS OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE SERVICE. AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY TESTIFIED BEFORE THAT SUB-COMMITTEE. HE MADE THE POINT THAT FIRST OF ALL, THE COMMERCIALS ARE OUT, PUT INTO THE PROGRAM SCHEDULED WAY IN ADVANCE BEFORE THEY COULD HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PROGRAM CONTENT... WE TRY AND KEEP THE COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING ASPECT COMPLETELY SEPARATE FROM WHAT IS SAID IN PROGRAM TERMS. OBVIOUSLY OUR CREDIBILITY IS EVERYTHING. DOCTORS AREN'T GOING TO LISTEN IF THEY THINK WE ARE JUST A PUBLIC RELATIONS ORGANIZATION FOR DRUG COMPANIES. AND WE MORE OR LESS IGNORE THE FACT OF WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM. THERE IS NO PRESSURE ON US TO TREAT A STORY IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. WE JUST APPLY NORMAL JOURNALIST STANDARDS OF EDITORIAL JUDGEMENT TO ANY STORY WE DO."

NARR: THIS NEW CONCEPT OF REACHING JUST A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE IS THE TREND OF THE FUTURE. BESIDES "BROADCASTS" FOR EVERYONE, THERE IS A NEED FOR "NARROWCASTS" TO SERVE SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION IN ALL SORTS OF PROFESSIONAL AREAS AND FIELDS OF INTEREST. AND PHYSICIANS FIND THIS DAILY COMPACT AND DIGESTEABLE PACKAGE OF INFORMATION VERY USEFUL.

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